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Greenwich Village ✦ Little Italy ✦ SoHo ✦ NoHo ✦ Hudson Square ✦ Chinatown ✦ Gansevoort Market

STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS

Fiscal Year 2023

PREFACE

Community Board 2 Manhattan (“CB2”) has been dramatically impacted by the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020 and since the shutdown that began in March 2020, has been struggling across many fronts. Amid protests, economic instability, and a permanently changed physical landscape (permanent roadbed outdoor dining), the District is bracing for more changes ahead.

In addition to our standing Committees, two working groups were created by CB2 in 2020. In May, the Reopening Working Group was created to respond quickly to the fast moving events of reopening non-essential businesses, the advent of new outdoor dining programs that crossed multiple licensing agencies, and to address issues as they relate to impacts caused by COVID-19 and reopening of our community from the almost total shutdown implemented in March. In June, the Equity Working Group was created to foster conversation and cultivate solutions to social justice issues in our neighborhoods in light of the movement that swept our City and nation following the murder of George Floyd, with the commitment to making racial equity a primary focus and to encourage an organizational culture that is viable and sustainable within a world of changing demographics and unremitting racial disparities. In 2021, due to the importance of its work, the Equity Working Group was upgraded to full committee status and is now called the Equity, Race and Justice Committee.

Throughout this Statement and in our work over this year, CB2 highlights and reflects on some of the changes necessary to bridge the gap in the process of stabilizing our community in an equitable manner. COVID-19 has brought forth a confluence of issues surrounding racial inequities, public health, housing insecurity, job insecurity, and income inequality. As these challenges are also ongoing and evolving rapidly, sometimes monthly and even weekly, we also point those interested to CB2’s monthly resolutions on these topics which can be found on our website. The impacts of COVID-19 have not yet been fully realized and we are still in the midst of profound impact on our education system, local economy, businesses, housing, social services, residents, workplaces, arts and cultural institutions, and transportation. We are experiencing an upheaval in our community with no predictable end, yet our community heavily relies on an opening and functioning local economy that depends heavily on office workers, visitors and tourists both local, regional, national and international. Under such unprecedented circumstances, our budget priorities signal the areas of highest concern amid an anticipated

deficit that could lead to a decline in services for our residents and businesses.

I. DISTRICT OVERVIEW

A. Geography

Community Board 2 is a diverse district, bounded on the north by 14th Street, the south by Canal Street, the east by the Bowery/Fourth Avenue, and the west by the Hudson River. It is a unique and rapidly expanding community that includes the vibrant neighborhoods of Little Italy, part of Chinatown, SoHo, NoHo, Greenwich Village, the West Village, Gansevoort Market, the South Village and Hudson Square.

B. Population

The population of Community Board 2 has been steadily rising since 2010, with an estimated population of 92,445, according to the 2020 Census, which is an increase of 2.7% since 2010. While there was some concern that the COVID-19 pandemic would result in a decrease in population, the 2020 Census indicates those concerns may have been unfounded. However, as the pandemic continues into 2021, future Census data could still show a decline in population, at least in the short term. It should also be noted that the five major universities in the district - New York University, the New School, the Cooper Union, Hebrew Union College, and Cardozo Law School typically add a substantial non-permanent population to our neighborhoods, but were mostly empty during the majority of 2020 while students were studying virtually from home. However, as NYU and The New School continue to expand, we expect the student populations to grow further in the years ahead. While the students that join us every year are welcome, it is clear that the city needs to consider their numbers when looking to allocate services to Community District 2.

C. Income structure

Much of the architecture and history of our district has been maintained by residents who are determined to preserve the middle class, live-work, merchant and artisan atmosphere of our neighborhoods, past and future, but socioeconomic patterns are changing drastically. According to the 2015 – 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), the median income for District 2 for was \$127,116, while the poverty rate was 8.0% and the unemployment rate was 2.8%. It is yet to be determined how dramatically the COVID-19 pandemic will affect these numbers, but it seems clear that these numbers will be worse once we have more data over the next few years.

D. Housing

In recent years, the median monthly rent in District 2 increased to the highest in the City at \$2,311, according to the 2015 – 2019 ACS with 39% of renters in Community District 2 considered rent burdened (spent at least 30% of household income on rent) and 18.5% of renters in Community District 2 considered severely rent burdened (spent more than 50% of household income on rent). We anticipate these numbers to increase when we have data for 2020 and 2021 at the Community District level as result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

E. Tourism/Visitors

The covid-19 pandemic has had a brutal impact on the district’s tourism industry, but as more and more people get vaccinated, museums and theaters re-opening, and travel to and from the United States resuming in recent months, we are already seeing tourists returning to the district. While the current numbers are deflated, we are hopeful that we can return to pre-pandemic numbers as things continue to improve. This applies to the local workforce, too, as businesses have begun to reopen. However, not all employees have returned in person as many businesses are allowing their employees to continue to work remotely, which will surely impact our local economy. The question remains as to how severe the impact will be as the pandemic is still ongoing, even though things have improved overall.

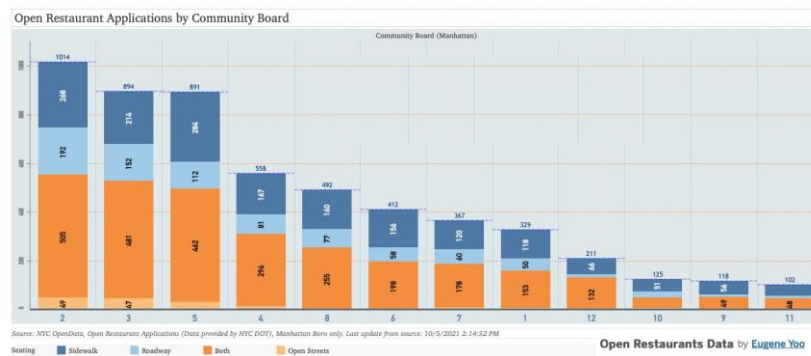
II. LAND USE AND HOUSING

In 2021, CB2 reviewed four citywide text amendments and a rezoning application for SoHo, NoHo and Chinatown. Citywide text amendments included Elevate Transit, Hotels, Health and Fitness, the Permanent Open Restaurants program, and the New York City Council Intro 2186 bill to create a ten-year comprehensive planning cycle connecting budget, land use, and strategic planning processes. The SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan rezoning application was the continuation of a DCP initiative that, if passed, would transform 56 mostly-historic blocks with the intention of creating additional opportunities for affordable housing.

A. PERMANENT OPEN RESTAURANTS PROGRAM

CB2 is home to the highest density of liquor licenses, sidewalk cafes and destination eating and drinking establishments in New York City. The density of liquor licenses has created, and will continue to create, quality of life impacts on our residents.

One Size Does Not Fit All CB2 has the Most Open Restaurants Citywide



We recommended denial of this proposed citywide zoning text amendment that would remove sidewalk café regulations from the Zoning Resolution in an effort to create a new unified sidewalk and roadway outdoor dining program administered by DOT because:

1. This one-size-fits-all text amendment failed to address the unique needs of districts that already have a high saturation of bars, restaurants and liquor-licensed premises in residential areas.
2. Community boards need to be given an opportunity to review, comment and make recommendations on the POR text amendment in tandem with the DOT rules and regulations.
3. Sidewalk café regulations should remain in the Zoning Resolution Article I Chapter 4) because, when enforced, they have worked well for decades.
4. We felt that DOT and/or DCP should revise the EAS and then do a neighborhood-specific EIS that reflects the impact of the Temporary Open Restaurants program on this and other severely affected community districts, and that greater attention be given to ADA accessibility, enforcement, noise, sanitation, and socioeconomic issues.

Due to the lack of any studies measuring the real impacts of the proposed action on actual neighborhoods, CB2, block associations, concerned citizens, and Council Member Corey Johnson's office were forced to fill this void by compiling statistics and doing their own studies. It was an extraordinary effort by multiple local groups that were united in their opposition to this program's appropriateness for our nine historic neighborhoods. In fact, a survey completed by the Speaker's office found that 93% of temporary program participants in Council District 3 (CD3), which overlaps with the boundaries of CB2, were not compliant with current DOT guidelines.

Absent the details of the rules and regulations that would accompany it, this one-size-fits-all plan does not address the noise, trash, vermin, accessibility, lack of enforcement, safety and other quality of life impacts in CB2 inherent in the Temporary Open Restaurants program.

B. SOHO/NOHO(CHINATOWN) NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

At the beginning of 2019, an initiative was formed to examine the key land use and zoning issues in SoHo and NoHo and seek community input. Sponsored by Department of City Planning, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Council Member Margaret Chin, this initiative consisted of public workshops and meetings of an Advisory Group (18 members that included government representatives, arts and culture organizations, neighborhood groups, businesses and property owners, historic preservation advocates, and CB2's Chair Carter Booth, but no certified artists).

In April 2019, CB2 went on record as opposed to making any changes that would further drive up the value of property so as to displace artists and change the fundamental character of the two neighborhoods. In a series of subsequent Land Use Committee meetings and full board meetings, the public expressed concern over the planning process, the potential harm to the character of these neighborhoods, and the negative impact on its long-term residents and artists.

A final report, entitled "Envision SoHo/NoHo: A Summary of Findings and Recommendations" was released by the plan sponsors in November 2019. It raised many questions and suggested numerous topics for further discussion and research.

Following the publication of the Envision SoHo NoHo Report, and without further examination of the topics raised in that report, DCP rolled out its SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan in October 2020. In December, CB2 submitted a 140-page detailed response to the Plan, which questioned

the basis for the Plan point-by-point. When DCP responded with the Final Scope of Work in May 2021, CB2 was shocked to see that virtually none of its suggestions had been incorporated into the Plan. Our July 2021 resolution in response was an emphatic denial, based on the following:

1. The proposed SoHo, NoHo and Chinatown rezoning fails to achieve affordable housing goals and instead incentivizes office, dormitory and large retail development and will displace existing rent-protected and low-income residents.
2. The plan fails to guarantee any critically-needed affordable housing.
3. Zoning changes will squeeze out small retail stores and negatively impact quality of life for current and future residents.
4. The proposed “mechanism” for converting manufacturing use group 17-d, Joint Live-Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA), to residential use group 2 creates adverse and unknown consequences for current residents and will eliminate this unique use.
5. Massive increases in allowable square footage will erase the “historic” of the once-historic districts and fundamentally transform SoHo, NoHo and Chinatown.
6. The Mayor's Plan offers no mitigation measures for the significant adverse impacts on open space, shadows, historic and cultural resources, transportation and construction.

At the end of October, the City Planning Commission approved the Plan with virtually no changes.

C. AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS

CB2 remains committed to protecting and preserving the affordable housing that we have and supporting opportunities to build affordable housing where practicable and appropriate. We urge the city to increase direct city investment in 100%-affordable housing construction, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and revise requirements that mandate far greater numbers of affordable housing units with lower median incomes and fewer loopholes than currently under the city’s Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program

Current Affordable Housing Stock in CB2. We are already home to thousands of affordable housing units of various types. Among them are traditional rent stabilized units, Joint Live-Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) units in rent stabilization, Interim Multiple Dwelling (IMD) units currently under the supervision of the Loft Board, previous IMD loft units that are now rent stabilized, Mitchell Lama housing units and project-based Section-8 buildings. Rent stabilized units can be found in great numbers throughout CB2 in almost all of our neighborhoods including in Greenwich Village, the West Village, South Village, SoHo, NoHo, Little Italy, Nolita and Chinatown, and to a lesser extent in the Meatpacking District, Union Square South, and Hudson Square.

The passage of the Housing Stability and Tenant Protections Act of 2019 strengthened existing rent stabilization laws and included provisions to end high-rent vacancy deregulation, narrowed the preferential rent loophole, and put in place more protections against unnecessary major capital improvements (MCIs) and individual apartment improvements (IAI).

A recent report derived from tax bills indicates that between 2007 and 2020 there was an increase of 1,975 rent stabilized units in CB2. During that same time period, 6,407 units were removed from rent stabilization yielding a net loss of 4,432 affordable units.

CB2 supports anti-displacement provisions that: a) prohibit upzoning of any site that has rent-regulated or loft law units because this will create financial incentives for demolition; b) eliminate sites where additional FAR can only be used to add vertical enlargements because this will result in penthouse additions and no affordable housing; and c) include Certification of No Harassment provisions before applying for a permit for a change in use or demolition. Reliance on legal remedies that can take years to work their way through the courts to cure displacement by construction, neglect or harassment requires tenants to take often-unavailable time to find and consult with attorney and take off from work to provide testimony and attend related appointments--all while the tenants and their families experience dangerous, sometimes barely livable conditions.

Legalization of Loft Board Units in SoHo/NoHo (M1-5A/B Zoning Districts)

As of September 2020, New York City's Loft Board website showed 475 Loft Board units (Interim Multiple Dwelling Units – IMD) in 87 buildings in CB2 that have not yet been fully legalized by the building owners and moved into rent-stabilization.

The Loft Board also records 401 units in 231 buildings in CB2 that have been legalized since the 1980s, which includes those units entering the rent stabilization system as new housing units with affordable rents. This number does not include the units in 100+ buildings where the landlord “bought out” the legal rent stabilized tenant, the tenant was disqualified, etc., which resulted in removal of those units from rent stabilization.

Throughout 2021, the Loft Board has been taking a hard look at its rules and regulations of its administrative code. At its September 17, 2020 meeting, the Loft Board indicated that it was looking at including the designation of Loft Law buildings in the DOB's Building Information Search. The inclusion would further enable easy Identification of Interim Multiple Dwellings throughout the City. The Loft Board is also addressing the self-certification process with DOB, and considering standardizing the Article 7C legalization annotation on Certificates of Occupancy so that there is a clearer record of which buildings were processed as IMDs, and which units in those buildings have historically been JLWQA.

Affordable Housing Opportunities

When, in March 2014, Borough President Brewer asked each community board to compile a list of sites within its jurisdiction that could serve as opportunities for affordable housing, CB2's Affordable Housing Working Group submitted a list of 20+ potential affordable housing sites, which within the M1-5A and M1-5B zoning districts in SoHo and NoHo included: a) 2 Howard Street/203-209 Centre Street, a parking structure owned by the U.S. government and one of many locations that Friends of Elizabeth Street Garden suggested as an alternative to developing Elizabeth Street Garden; b) Block 208 (bounded by Lafayette Street, Centre Street, Howard and Canal Streets); and c) Block 207 (bounded by Centre Street, Baxter Street, Hester and Canal Streets), which includes 180 Centre Street, a privately owned parking lot.

1. **2 Howard Street.** CB2 supports exploring the development of 100% permanently affordable housing at 2 Howard Street/203-209 Centre Street. The first step is for the [Public Building Reform Board](#) to transfer the site, under President Biden's January 2021 [Executive Order 13985](#), *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. Rep. Jerrold Nadler, our Congressman, is coordinating.

2. **388 Hudson Street.** 388 Hudson Street, is a 25,000 square foot, gravel-filled, city-owned lot that resulted from the creation of one of New York City's water tunnels as an access site. As a part of the creation of this water tunnel access site and the city's acquisition of the property in 1999, this site was promised to CB2 as a future park in consideration of the significant lack of public open space within CB2. In December 2015, CB2 passed a resolution in support of building affordable housing at this location but only if Elizabeth Street Garden is saved in its entirety, providing a win-win for our community. 388 Hudson Street offers the opportunity for four to five times as much affordable housing as the Elizabeth Street Garden site, which is slated for a much smaller affordable housing development project for seniors.
3. **21 Spring Street.** Preserving 252 units of Section-8 housing at 21 Spring Street.
4. **Special Hudson Square District.** The Special Hudson Square District was established in 2013, in part to facilitate and encourage new residential development. Right after the rezoning, we were starting to see some applications for conversions to residential in this neighborhood, some of which included affordable units under designation as an Inclusionary Housing area, but many of these residential opportunities were ultimately replaced with as-of-right commercial office developments. Examples include:
 - At 39 Clarkson Street, in 2015, CB2 supported the inclusion of affordable housing, but the project was ultimately built as office and commercial.
 - At 112 Charlton Street, in 2015, CB2 recommended denial of the application unless the applicant supported CPC's goals for the Special Hudson Square District by including affordable housing in the project. That project did not go forward.
 - At 111 Leroy Street, the 2015 application was for a 12-story building with 30 condo units or a seven-story building with 21 units. If the applicant were to be allowed to build the bigger building, 20% of the building was proposed as a stand-alone residence for seniors with 13 units. If the applicant could only build the smaller building, the 20% would have consisted of four affordable units. The community was overwhelmingly in favor of the affordable portion of the building, but against lifting the Restrictive Declaration because of the increase in size, which was out of character. Ultimately, the developer built a luxury 10-story building with nine full-floor condominiums and five adjacent single-family townhomes.
 - In 2018, Disney signed a 99-year lease with Trinity Church Real Estate to develop 137 Varick Street for 1.2 million sq. ft. of office space for its NYC headquarters. In the FEIS, Trinity projected that a portion of this site would be developed for nearly 600,000 sq. ft of housing, including 139 affordable units.
5. **550 Washington Street.** In December 2016, the City approved zoning changes for the mammoth 550 Washington Street site, one of two undeveloped sites remaining that are appropriate for large-scale development. At 550, CB2 supported the development of 476 permanently affordable housing units, consisting of 178 units of permanently affordable senior housing on the north site and 298 units of affordable housing on the center site. Though the north side is still on track to be senior housing, construction has not commenced. The rest of the site is currently under construction for an office campus for

Google without the large number of affordable housing units that were promised to the community.

CB2 Affordable Housing Needs

1. We call upon HPD to allocate funds to develop affordable housing at 2 Howard, once the site is transferred to the City.
2. We ask the Department
3. of Real Estate and/or HPD to allocate funds to identify all government-owned properties where affordable housing might be constructed (including sites such as police and fire stations.)We ask HPD to allocate funds to coordinate with City and State agencies to commission a comprehensive inventory by both quantity and type of all rent-stabilized, rent-controlled and Interim Multiple Dwelling (Loft Law) units in the district.
4. We ask DCP to allocate funds for a study of “soft” sites (i.e., sites with less than 50% of current FAR) in CD2 that have the potential for redevelopment. This could be for voluntary inclusionary housing or for standard development. This inventory should include all parts of the district and be organized by subdistrict and by current zoning.
5. We ask the Loft Board and/or DOB to allocate funds for an inventory of Interim Multiple Dwellings in CD2 that includes a complete count of not only the current units but also all units created since the inception of their enabling legislation, including how many have been converted to other uses and how many such units exist today.

D. OVERSIZED RETAIL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Increasingly, residents must co-exist with oversized retail stores that operate late into the night, including 18-wheel truck deliveries and trash pickup trucks on a virtually 24/7 basis. Conversion and creation of the oversized retail stores and chain stores have not been accompanied by the traditional requirement to have appropriate facilities for loading docks. Without regulation, the situation can be unlivable. Likewise, bright advertising LED screens in the display windows and the general light spillage from closed stores need to be addressed.

CB2 strongly supports retailers, and especially small businesses, in our district. Nonconforming oversized retail operations, however, often bring numerous harms to our mixed-use neighborhoods and undermine the small, local-serving retailers that serve as the backbone of a thriving economy. Balance is needed here, along with solid and consistent enforcement of local zoning.

Non-permitted oversized retail, which has been allowed to operate on an ongoing basis in open violation of public policy, has become a significant problem within CB2’s M1-5B zoning districts. In 2015, CB2 identified 10 retail stores facing Broadway between Bleecker and Canal as illegal oversize retail establishments. Between 1996 and 2019, only four had completed the 74-922 Special Permit public review process. We know that these oversized, non-permitted operations are also a concern for the Department of Buildings, which in the spring of 2017 issued six ECB violations for illegal retail operations along the M1-5B Broadway corridor. However, during the adjudication of those ECB violations at the Office of Administrative Trials and

Hearings (OATH), numerous deficiencies were observed, both in regard to zoning inspections and zoning enforcement.

As of October, 2021, only one of these offenders—Zara at 503 Broadway—has come before CB2’s Land Use committee. Its application for a Special Permit for oversized retail—in essence, an application to legalize its current floor space—took up much of the Land Use committee’s energy in 2019. What could have been the first step in the overhaul of a flawed process resulted in nothing more than a token reduction in the number and hours of deliveries, despite the unified opposition of the community board and local residents.

Many changes of use and waivers of zoning requirements are issued during internal DOB deliberations without public review or input. While the impact of each waiver and change of use may seem small, the cumulative effect of these changes creates an overwhelmingly detrimental impact on the community.

CB2 questions whether: 1) The absence of backup documentation for Certificates of Occupancy at DOB is adequate justification for accepting changes of use involving Use Group 10 and oversize retail; and 2) It is advisable for DOB to continue to rely on self-certification to establish that requirements have been met for a change of use to large retail during the Special Permit process.

E. CONTEXTUAL ZONING BETWEEN UNIVERSITY PLACE AND FOURTH AVENUE

Community Board 2 continues to be concerned about the need for zoning changes to protect this corridor where tall buildings continue to go up as-of-right, despite the efforts of Village Preservation and others. This is a successful area with strong neighborhood character and many buildings occupied by small businesses, including ground floor retail stores and small offices on upper floors. A strong residential component thrives in the current mix of uses. The area is served by excellent mass transportation, Washington Square and Union Square parks, important universities, and proximity to many highly popular areas on all sides.

Action is required to protect the area, preferably with contextual rezoning that supports affordable housing requirements for all new buildings. City Planning should update its earlier report to include a CB2 public hearing.

F. STATUS OF COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND COMMITMENTS

In October 2021, the Land Use Committee started to assemble a list of community benefits that have accrued to CB2 in the last 10+ years as a result of ULURP- and non-ULURP-related applications. This list would be held by the CB2 office and should be updated annually by the Land Use Committee and other relevant committees. The list will continue to be updated and is available [here](#).

Key commitments that moved forward in the last year are:

1. In October 2021, the Gansevoort Arts Advisory Panel chose a master lease tenant for the space on Gansevoort, and is moving on to do the same for the second community benefit space further west in the area bounded by 7-11 Weehawken Street, 171-177 Christopher Street, and 300 West 10th Street. This is part of Aurora Capital’s application for a minor

modification to ULURP No. C 840260 ZMM, originally approved in 1984 at 60-74 Gansevoort Street LLC, 52-58 Gansevoort Street LLC, and 46-50 Gansevoort Street (between Washington and Greenwich Streets). The application sought to allow Use Groups 3, 4, and 6B (offices), which were not allowed pursuant to a restrictive declaration on the property, in addition to those use groups previously permitted at the property.

2. On November 9, 2021, the NYC School Construction Authority sent a letter to New York University that serves as the “School Election Notice” that the city is “ready to commence negotiations” on the Bleecker School (per the 2012 Restrictive Declaration).

III. SOCIAL SERVICES

A. Education

Key Priorities:

- *Fund the Bleecker School, a \$65 million option for NYC.*
- *Build the Hudson Square School and Public Gym Space.*
- *Fund Technology, Capital Improvements to Century Old Public Schools and Programs that Increase Diversity and Support our Most Vulnerable Students.*
- *Revise the CEQR Process for Building and Siting New Public Schools.*

Bleecker School NYC’s \$65 million Option to Build New Public School

New York City has the option to build a new Department of Education public school in Greenwich Village – the Bleecker School. For this to happen, the NYC Department of Education (DOE) must fund the school before the option expires on **December 31, 2021 or extend the option date.**

UPDATE: On November 9, 2021, the NYC School Construction Authority sent a letter to New York University that serves as the “School Election Notice” that the city is “ready to commence negotiations” on the Bleecker School per the 2012 Restrictive Declaration.

- **What is the Bleecker School?:** As part of the New York University 2012 up-zoning, NYU’s key community giveback was the option to build a 100,000 sq. ft. public school on NYU-owned land, “the Bleecker School.” If the Bleecker School is not built, 100,000 square feet of school space reverts to NYU for university use and option expires on December 31, 2021, \$65+ million in value transfers from NYC taxpayers to NYU, based on the average price per buildable square foot in Manhattan and arguably higher, due to the lack of vacant land in Greenwich Village. Please note, if the option expires, NYU would allocate no less than 25,000 square feet of above grade space for a community facility, when and if it decides to build the Bleecker Building. However, if for any one-year period NYU is unable to rent this space, 100% of the site reverts to NYU permanently.
- **What Needs to Happen:** The DOE must fund the Bleecker School in its FY 2020 – FY 2024 Capital Plan before December 30, 2021. Alternatively, the city and NYU can extend the option expiration date to 2025 – the date originally proposed by NYU. While this

allows the city more time to fund the Bleecker School, NYU has publicly stated that it will not agree to further extensions.

- **What Kind of School Can be Built at the Bleecker School Site?:** The Bleecker School can serve public school students from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade, i.e. PK-5, 6-8 or PK 8, but a high school would require NYU consent. The Bleecker School can serve general education students, Students with Disabilities, such as students with dyslexia, or other learning disabilities and/or District 75 students.
- **CB 2's Position:** CB 2's October 2021 Resolution in Support of Ensuring the Bleecker School is Built: An Option Worth \$65 Million to NYC Taxpayers **urges the SCA and Department of Education to:** 1) Confirm its intention to construct a school on Bleecker Street before it loses the option and the site return entirely to NYU's control; 2) Immediately advocate to meet the extended deadline NYU has offered, and meet with CB 2 to discuss ways the Community Board 2 can support the DOE's commitment to siting the school at 130 Bleecker Street; and 3) Continue to support that when the Bleecker School is funded and built, it serves the educational needs of our community, with particular focus on the possibility of developing a school to serve students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities. Currently, there are no DOE public schools or programs for students with dyslexia and language-based learning disabilities, even though there are several private special education schools and a newly opened charter school specifically designed to address the learning needs of these students.
- **For Updates:** Visit [bit.ly/Bleecker FAQ](https://bit.ly/BleeckerFAQ).

Hudson Square School: As part of the 2013 Hudson Square rezoning, Trinity Church committed to build the core and shell of a new public school and the DOE has the option to build expanded recreation facilities at this site. Trinity Church has yet to move forward with its development plans and CB 2 wants to ensure that the public school and gym commitments are not further delayed.

- **Public School:** As part of the 2013 Hudson Square rezoning, Trinity Church committed to build the core and shell of a 444-seat elementary school, under a March 20, 2013 Restrictive Declaration by The Rector, Church-Wardens and Vestrymen of Trinity Church in the City of New York. The DOE would fund the remaining cost, the majority of which is funded in the DOE's Capital Plan for FY 2020-2024, released in February 2019.
- **Public Gym.** In addition, in a March 12, 2013 letter from the Department of Education to the Speaker of the New York City Council, the DOE has the option to build expanded recreation facilities in the Duarte Square site, including a) a double-height, 6,300 square foot gym, b) a 3,500 square foot multipurpose assembly space and c) 2,100 square foot multipurpose space.
- **CB 2's priorities for Duarte Square are to ensure that:**
 - Trinity Church, or any new owner, and the SCA establish a timeframe for developing the school,
 - The SCA funds the additional recreation facilities and that these are designed with a separate entrance to allow for community use during non-school hours,
 - No charter school claims the site, and,

- The school is designed and built with a separate gym and auditorium, not a “gymatorium,” as well as an outdoor playground to provide sufficient outdoor recreation space.

Funding Needs at Existing CB 2 Schools: PS 3, PS 41, PS 130, MS 297, P721, P751 and our six high schools: **Broome Street Academy, Chelsea Career and Technical Education, City-As-School, Harvest Collegiate, Harvey Milk and NYC iSchool.**

- **Technology:** Post pandemic, students require technology to access education in school and consequently all CB 2 schools need additional investment in technology, for smart boards, laptops, tablets and high speed broadband.
- **Other Capital Upgrades to Century-Old Schools.** CB 2 supports significant capital improvements for school-wide facilities and programs, including:
 - **PS 3.** Gymateria dividers to use the space for multiple groups to increase flexibility using socially distanced guidelines and weatherproofing of the rooftop playground;
 - **City-As-School.** STEAM and Literacy programs including a Wet Lab, Maker Space, Literacy Lab and Library / Media Center and adding water bottle refilling stations; and,
 - **Broome Street.** Cafeteria upgrade and library, which also would be available to The Door members.

Expense Priorities include funding:

- [NYC Men Teach](#) to recruit, train and retain talented non-traditional public school educators in order to close the representation gap between our students and those that teach them;
- **Washing machines and dryers** at schools serving students who live in temporary housing, because students who lack access to laundry facilities tend to have higher absentee rates;
- **Arts education** to maintain most recent baseline funding; and,
- **Structured Literacy**, both teacher training and reading and writing curricula.

Funding, Siting and Building New Public Schools: The City Environment Quality Review (CEQR) process is flawed for analyzing how new development impacts public schools and overcrowding. Most development projects do not trigger an analysis of their impact on school seats and even when a new development triggers an Environmental Impact Analysis, the CEQR Technical Manual and EIS guidelines do not accurately estimate the need for new public school seats.

Student Health & Safety: In light of the pandemic and the need for socially distanced, outdoor recreation, CB 2 needs much **more outdoor space** for children of various ages, especially those under five and over twelve – in particular, the addition of more **public park spaces with artificial and natural turf.** We also support efforts to open school playgrounds during non-school hours and increase bike safety for youth with the addition of more protected bike lanes.

CB 2 recommends that:

1. The Department of City Planning develop new and better formulas, based upon current demographics, that more accurately represent the percentage of families with school age children that comprise our local population, and considers the number of families who can be expected to move into new residential development;
2. The Department of City Planning to institute a policy that would require a school impact study, using local data as required under the 2014 law, on all new residential construction and conversion, regardless of size; and,
3. The City developed a mechanism that would require developers of all new residential buildings to contribute to a capital fund for public schools, and/or include new school seats within their projects.

B. Youth

In light of the pandemic and the need for socially distanced, outdoor recreation, CB2 needs much *more outdoor play space* for children of various ages, especially those under five and over twelve – in particular, the addition of more *public park spaces with artificial and natural turf*. We also support efforts to open school playgrounds during non-school hours and increasing bike safety for youth with the addition of more protected bike lanes.

C. Seniors

The crisis brought on by COVID-19 accelerated an effort initiated by Greenwich House - our primary provider of senior services - to connect volunteers in the community with older residents in GH's catchment area. This telephone-based Neighbor Network, which is still growing, will be an important tool in building up the social connections of our older residents - curbing social isolation, identifying and meeting needs, and producing better health outcomes.

It is important that the City support the Neighbor Network. This is as a model that deserves to be expanded.

CB2 also needs better data on our senior residents and would like funding for this research, whether it is allocated to the CB2 staff or to our primary service provider, Greenwich House. While our district ranks high in nearly every indicator, including income, measures of the median fail to tell an accurate narrative, especially where seniors are concerned. Greenwich Village property values rose dramatically about twenty years ago, but our senior residents arrived long before, when this community was less affluent, when the cost of living was less expensive, and when rents were lower and more units were rent-stabilized. The lack of more complete data on seniors limits the ability of DFTA to match City resources to best meet residents' needs.

DFTA recently revised the design of its Request for Proposals for adult centers to allow more flexibility in innovative design of services. We welcome new models to meet the needs of the curious, artistic, intellectually vibrant – and needy – seniors that comprise Greenwich House's membership. As of this writing, CB2 awaits the response of DFTA to Greenwich House's submission to the new RFP.

Greenwich House relies on others to provide complementary services. One of these is Visiting Neighbors, a volunteer-based organization that operates what appears to be a cost-effective

program aimed at improving quality of life, enhancing health indicators, and reducing hospital stays for older residents. Visiting Neighbors has been receiving discretionary City Council funds since DFTA cancelled its contract, forcing it to significantly reduce its scope. We urge DFTA to contract with Visiting Neighbors again.

D. Retroactive contracts

An additional threat to social service agencies is the pace of the City's fulfillment of city contracts. Social services providers are compelled to advance funding to provide services, while the City takes as long as a year to reimburse these expenses. This provides cash flow problems for our providers, increasing the cost of debt service produced by credit lines, and threatening the very existence of providers working at small-scale. We urge the City to improve procurement systems to shorten the time required to register contracts.

E. Healthcare

In 2014, a stand-alone emergency department operated by Northwell Health opened on the campus of the former St. Vincent's Hospital. While not the first such facility in New York State or New York City, it is the first of its kind in Manhattan, and a new model for a community that had lived near a full-service hospital since 1849.

At the time of St. Vincent's closing, a Community Health Assessment was conducted to measure our community's access to health and emergency services. Seven years after the opening of Lenox Health Greenwich Village (LHGV), our community needs an updated survey in order to understand if this model is successful or if our community is experiencing gaps in care. This has value not only for CB2 but for the city as a whole as health providers across the sector revisit their service models. We urge the City and State to fund the commission of a Community Health Assessment as a follow-up to the study conducted in 2011 by CUNY School of Public Health at Hunter College.

The COVID crisis provided a successful experiment with inter-system collaboration, as it forced hospitals to share best practices in order to address the emergency. The City and State should advance this collaboration so that interfacility transfer becomes seamless for patients throughout the city.

Separate monitor: The Joint Commission and other private monitoring agencies classify Northwell's stand-alone emergency department – Lenox Health Greenwich Village - as an integral part of the entire Lenox Hill system rather than as a separate facility. This makes it impossible to monitor the performance of this facility that is so crucial to our district's health outcomes. This Community District needs a method to monitor the performance of LHGV – Lenox Hill's off-site emergency department - as a separate facility, not as part of Lenox Hill's emergency department overall.

With the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing and uncertainty around the long-term effects of COVID-19 on individual health, public health and healthcare service providers, public health remains a key area in which we believe the city should focus time and resources. The city should continue to evaluate the need for public health initiatives within the district, whether it be clinics, education efforts, telehealth services, community food services, or other initiatives. We

encourage creative ideas and solutions, with one example being the newly announced lease of the Northern Dispensary building to God's Love We Deliver, where we hope to see a positive community impact stemming from the use of a building which has sat empty for decades

F. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Community

The Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Questioning (“LGBTQ”) community is an important part of our history and is integral to our strength as a community.

We are grateful for the work of our strong social service organizations, the LGBT Center and The Door, which service residents from within our district and largely from without. The LGBT Center operates its own programs and provides space for over 400 individuals and organizations to run programs of their own, all of which draw 6,000 people a week from around the metropolitan area. The Door helps adolescents and emerging adults find jobs, education, and health services.

We support increased funding for The Door’s important outreach program. This initiative is designed to connect homeless and runaway youth to social services. Funding for this program relies on a yearly application for discretionary City Council funds, which generally fall shy of The Door’s budget. This program generally makes over 2000 contacts a year and has succeeded in providing additional services to thousands of young people. In 2018, 35% of those served identified as LGBTQ.

G. Tenant Displacement

Resident displacement is a concern in our community, where the sharp increase in property values over the last generation has encouraged landlords to seek ways to convert rent-stabilized units into market-rate apartments. Tenant harassment is a frequent complaint heard by the City Councilmember’s office. New laws passed in New York State improve security for incumbent tenants, but we fear that gaps still exist.

We regard our incumbent population as an important characteristic of our district and its history. We would benefit from data to shed more light on the issue of housing instability among our residents. It is our sense that statistics on median income, health, and rents fail to provide a full profile of our community’s makeup. It would also be beneficial to have data on rent-controlled and rent-stabilized units in our district.

We support increased funding for agencies and non-profit organizations providing free- and low-cost legal services to tenants facing eviction and harassment. The City’s decision to expand Right to Counsel to all zip codes is a welcome initiative. With the current New York State eviction moratorium set to expire in January 2022, we urge the city to ensure that it has prepared adequate resources to assist tenants in a timely and effective manner despite the potential for a surge in eviction proceedings citywide.

Legal services to tenants are currently being provided in CD2 by Mobilization for Justice under a ten-year grant it received from a private developer – The Rudin Organization – as mitigation for impact produced by its development of new luxury housing. The contract is near its expiration,

and it is unclear whether representation for tenants will be as robust once this private contract is terminated.

H. Homelessness

We recognize that an equitable distribution of homeless services throughout the city relies on each Community District in the city sharing the task of caring for residents in need. At the time of this writing, CD2 has no homeless shelters in its boundaries. However, three shelters are in different stages of development.

We support the imminent opening of a Safe Haven drop-in center named Paul's Place, to be operated by the Center for Urban Community Services, with supportive services and temporary housing. It is critical that homeless adults with mental health or substance abuse issues have more than just a bed; they need case management and care.

At the same time, we are concerned that meeting this important need not come at the cost of quality of life to area residents. West 14th Street is a vulnerable pocket of the neighborhood that has struggled with property values and incidents of crime and mayhem. It houses many commercial establishments but also residents and small children, and is adjacent to other streets that are fully residential. It is important that the Safe Haven have sufficient funds to prevent any negative impacts due to its operations.

We also support the opening of a homeless shelter for women, to be operated by Project Renewal on West 11th Street. We know it is not enough to provide a bed in our community; it is important that we integrate this group of newcomers into our neighborhoods. The Advisory Council that will accompany this development will play a critical role. We hope that other local organizations, too, will create opportunities for engagement.

While West 11th Street is not the marginal area that West 14th Street is, neighbors' concerns about safety and quality of life are valid at this location as well. The City has promised thoughtful programming, high-quality housing, and thorough security at this site, and we will need robust funding from the City to ensure that this shelter achieves its promise.

At the time of this writing, DSS-DHS is also working with service provider WestHab to develop a general population shelter for 200 adult men on the corner of Wooster and Canal Streets in SoHo. This contract is a response to an open RFP that DSS-DHS maintains in an effort to expand its shelter capacity. In New York City, the right to shelter is guaranteed by law to anyone who seeks it, and with an average of approximately 16,000 single adults in shelters per day, the city's need for shelter beds remains urgent.

However, CB2 is concerned that the Canal Street facility live up to the promises DSS-DHS and WestHab have made to the community: that the shelter's social service program will be robust; that safety will be a high priority both within and without the shelter; that the operator will build communication with the community; that staffing will be sufficient to operate a facility that is high-quality in every way. The community has expressed concerns that this facility not become a "warehouse" that becomes a blight on its neighborhood and an injury to its residents.

The City's effort to guarantee prevailing wages to shelter staff is encouraging. The Community Advisory Boards that are required of every shelter's operation are also critical for establishing strong working relationships.

In considering the concerns around street homelessness, we are pleased that the City increased funding to the Manhattan Outreach Consortium. This is challenging work, as the liberties of street homeless are protected by law and it can take scores of contacts to convince an individual to accept services. The likelihood of homeless New Yorkers being willing to come indoors relies on the quality of offerings the City can provide. More housing, more supportive housing options, more scattered-site housing, are all needed to reduce the population of street homeless

I. Substance Abuse

We support the work of Greenwich House as our local provider of needed substance abuse treatment to New Yorkers within our district and without. Here, too, this important work should not come at the cost of quality of life. Greenwich House's program on Mercer Street lies in the midst of a residential neighborhood and is close to playgrounds. Greenwich House should be provided with sufficient funding to ensure that it is able to prevent any negative impacts due to its operations.

Washington Square Park

The Manhattan Borough President responded to quality of life concerns in Washington Square Park by coordinating the work of social service provider organizations to increase their presence in the park. This has resulted in more outreach in Washington Square Park for individuals seeking shelter or seeking treatment for substance abuse, health, or mental health issues. Data will be needed to determine if the cost of expanding these programs has led to positive outcomes in the park and the surrounding streets or if different interventions are needed.

IV. EQUITY

The Equity Working Group (EWG) was created to foster conversation and cultivate solutions to social justice issues in our neighborhoods. The EWG commits to making racial equity a primary focus and to encourage an organizational culture that is viable and sustainable within a world of changing demographics and unremitting racial disparities.

Teacher Workforce Diversity

America's rapidly diversifying student population demands an equally diverse teaching force. New York City's District 2 has nearly 75% students of color, but employs a mere 40% teachers of color. Multiple studies of U.S. public school students have determined that assignment to a racially similar teacher is associated with substantive gains in achievement for both Black and white students; and that students matched to a same-race teacher perform better on standardized tests and are significantly less likely to drop out of school and more likely to attend a four-year college.

NYC Men Teach engages and recruits men of color to become teachers in New York City by providing early career support, professional development, mentoring, and networking services to diversify the teaching pipeline by recruiting and retaining 1,000 additional men of color to teach

in NYC schools, where currently less than 8% of the teachers are men of color. The professional development, program fellowships and school partnerships this program provides positively impacts the practice and policy around diversity in our schools and classrooms.

Commemoration of the African Diaspora

Our neighborhoods are defined by a history of political activism, unique architectural landscapes, an active creative community and the cultural mosaic of its inhabitants. It is equally defined by the erasure of its early inhabitants, landowners, and Black communities, like Little Africa, that once thrived within our boundaries. This buried, forgotten and ignored history has played an important role in shaping the neighborhoods that we know today. The creation of signage, markers, or public art acknowledging and celebrating the rich history and contributions of the African diaspora within CB2 would begin to correct that injustice.

Anti-Bias Training

Years of exposure to structural and cultural racialization and privilege have embedded stereotypes and biases in our individual psyches and the broader culture. And because of the link among cultural stereotypes and narratives, and systemic policies, practices and behaviors, implicit bias is one part of the system of inequity that serves to justify inequitable practices and behaviors. Anti-bias training can advance meaningful change to these patterns and uproot deep-seated beliefs to foster a positive and supportive environment for all. In a year of national protests against racial injustice, the education and information such training provides is critical.

Development of Black and Latinx owned Small Businesses

In last year's District Needs Statement (FY 2022), we described the significant storefront vacancy rate and "retail blight" as an issue of great concern to our district. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the future of our small businesses has never been more precarious. The economic revitalization of our neighborhoods has never been more critical. Even when this pandemic subsides, roughly one-third of the City's 240,000 small businesses may never reopen, leaving empty storefronts, countless New Yorkers without jobs and all of us without the vital services they provided.

The disproportionately devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black-owned businesses is irrefutable. In New York State, Black business ownership fell by 70% from February to April 2020. Within New York City, a mere 2% of businesses are Black-owned. Within CB2 that number is even smaller. Black and Latinx emerging entrepreneurs disproportionately lack the basic building blocks for success. Access to peer/mentor networks, social capital, external financing, generational wealth, venture capital funding, education, business background, legal resources and affordable workspace are just some of the barriers faced by these prospective business owners.

Programs like [BE NYC](#) and JP Morgan's [Advancing Black Pathways](#) and [Master Card 500 million dollar pledge](#) aim to close the racial wealth gap by investing in initiatives that make the economy work for those traditionally disenfranchised from business ownership. Such a program would offer tremendous opportunity for more Black-owned businesses to start, grow and contribute to the revitalization of CB2.

A targeted initiative that brings an organization or initiative such as BE NYC to CB2 to create an incubator that supports these fledgling businesses would be of benefit to the entire community.

Historically, small businesses produce a higher economic impact on the local neighborhood and are the leading source of job creation in New York and nationwide. The income and revenue from small businesses traditionally circulates within the neighborhood in which they are located.

V. ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

A. Public Safety

We remain concerned about quality of life issues throughout our district. The large number of bars, clubs, and restaurants at times compete with residences within close proximity. We receive a significant number of noise complaints from residents, often about bars or clubs that crank up the amplified sound and, at times, exacerbate the situation by leaving their doors and windows open. The proliferation of street vendors, selling merchandise and food, has become a bane to many residents and businesses, particularly on Broadway and throughout SoHo though the efforts of the local Business Improvement District have improved enforcement efforts. We welcome vendors who obey the laws and rules of New York City. However, too many ignore clearance requirements and create problems in those areas. In particular, regulation of food trucks is piecemeal and enforcement is ineffective because different agencies are involved and there is no coordination among them. The City recently updated regulations for street vendors and food trucks and restructured the enforcement strategies, but COVID-19 has slowed the pace of those changes and it is unclear how effective the new enforcement strategies will be.

B. Resiliency

CB2 is a coastal district, with over a mile of waterfront along the Hudson River and over 10,000 residents living within the FEMA 0.2% chance floodplain. The district was impacted by Superstorm Sandy in 2012, with a portion of the district being inundated by floodwaters, causing significant property damage. As sea levels are projected to continue rising in the coming decades, storm-surge related risks are expected to increase.

Additionally, in summer and fall of 2021, a series of heavy rain events resulted in significant flooding across much of the city. The effects of climate change are likely to increase the frequency of such events in the future.

With the growing combined risk of coastal and rainwater flooding, CB2 encourages the city to work with community stakeholders to develop a plan for resiliency within the district, which could include, among other things, greater investment in green infrastructure as well as other flood protection measures.

C. Environment

New residents, replacing the manufacturers who previously hired private carters, must now rely on collection by the NYC Sanitation Department. With the reopening of international travel and the decline in COVID-19 restrictions, tourism is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels and further straining sanitation services. Sanitation District 2's limited staff is hard pressed to meet the community's growing needs as the area has increasingly become home to a twenty-four hour population. In particular, the agency's decision a few years ago to cut the number of supervisors

in each district has made it more difficult to clean the streets as thoroughly as they had been cleaned in the past.

While the city has restored many cuts made to sanitation services during COVID-19, sanitation does not adequately service corner garbage bins that see increased usage in many areas from weekend use especially from to go food and drink containers.

The advent of roadside dining has also created impacts on local residential trash pickups and missed collections and roadside dining structures are anticipated to have significant impacts on snow removal operations throughout CB2, in particular on narrow streets and areas where there are multiple eating and drinking establishments on the same block.

D. Public Health

COVID-19 has an ongoing dramatic impact on New York City and CB2 at this time, which is currently difficult to evaluate except that it is clear that the impacts have been disproportionate across communities of color and income levels.

Our community board continues to work diligently with the World Trade Center Environmental Health Center's Community Advisory Council to pass federal legislation that would provide permanent funding for this center along with the other centers dedicated to those affected by 9/11. In the interim, it is important that the City continue its funding and support of these centers.

We are very interested in ensuring that the number of new HIV infections in the City decreases and that those living with HIV and AIDS receive the services they need to remain healthy and to have stable living environments. It is essential that the City fund – and advocate forcefully with the State and Federal governments to fund – new methods to help prevent new infections, research into how to effectively reach the populations that are seeing higher infection rates, and support for the non-profit service providers who are the best responders to the epidemic and yet are losing government funding.

We are pleased the City has dedicated significant resources and is now taking a pro-active approach in combating the rat population in our City. In particular, we applaud the Rat Indexing Initiative. We urge the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and particularly the Parks Department to continue these aggressive efforts and to coordinate these efforts to address the recent increase in the rat population due to the growth of the Temporary Open Restaurant program.

VI. TRAFFIC and TRANSPORTATION

When looking at any issue that comes up regarding traffic in this district, our board considers the importance of balancing all the modes of transportation important in New York City – pedestrian, public transportation, bicycles, cars, taxis and trucking.

One of the District's major traffic and transportation problems is with vehicular congestion around the entrance and exit to the Holland Tunnel. The tunnel brings in great volumes of private vehicles visiting the city from out of state. In addition, trucks make many local commercial

deliveries, and use our narrow streets to travel from the Hudson River to the F.D.R. Drive, south to the Financial District and to the outer boroughs. Our fragile network of narrow streets is vulnerable to the heavy impact to our infrastructure, and our population is endangered by the constant threat of vehicular conflicts to our safety as well as to our health by vehicular emissions that pollute our air.

Every year in our budget requests, we ask that the City work with the Port Authority to consider new approaches to dealing with the traffic back-ups that are caused by the Holland Tunnel. We are pleased to note that some of these problems have now been examined by DOT's Hudson Square/West Village Transportation Study to identify and address longstanding transportation challenges as well as challenges and opportunities anticipated in the near future, and we look forward to implementation of the proposals that have resulted from this study. We also ask for enforcement strategies to help keep traffic from "blocking the box" at intersections, as well as to control honking, especially now that "No Honking" signs are no longer used, and to curtail reckless driving done to circumvent congestion. We continue to work with the Hudson Square Business Improvement District to address many of these Holland Tunnel problems, and look to continue to work with them and the relevant agencies, to find and implement long lasting solutions, with hopes that these agencies will respond to our needs and recommendations.

Community District 2 has several internationally known tourist destinations that encourage heavy nighttime and weekend usage of the district's streets, by both cars and pedestrians. New York City Transit should be initiating a major effort to increase the use of public transportation in this context as well as in general by making it more comfortable, convenient, accessible and frequent, and making transit access points more user friendly for both visitors and residents. With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on transit use and the MTA budget, we understand that improvements we sorely need for a faster, more accessible, reliable system have been delayed, but we look forward to such improvements once operations are back to normal.

Disabled access in our subway stations is greatly lacking, with not even a handful of stations in the CB2 District providing either elevators and/or escalators to enable the many physically challenged in our area to use the subways. Although installation of one more ADA accessible entrance has been added in CB2, much more accessibility is needed. Our goal is to have every one of the subway stations in CB2 be furnished with the elevators and escalators that will give all of our citizens the rightful access they need to get around. Although some steps are now being taken to encourage the development community to help build disabled access through zoning bonuses and other zoning changes, these provisions do not ensure the swift implementation that is needed, and we urge that other approaches be examined to provide the access that is so sorely needed. In addition, every effort needs to be made to repair and rehabilitate our deteriorating subway stations for users' comfort and safety. In particular, the West 4th Street station has been severely deteriorating over many years of neglect to the point that current conditions are not only off-putting, but also a threat to people's health and safety. All of the platforms and surrounding areas are plagued with moldy, leaky and peeling walls and ceilings, and a full rehabilitation is long overdue.

CB2 has passed at different times at least three resolutions in support of congestion pricing, both to raise funds for transit improvements and to curtail the ever-growing congestion that disrupts our streets. Now that congestion pricing has been approved, we look forward to the improvements it will bring, not only in making our streets safer, less crowded and easier to walk

through while helping to provide necessary support for transit, but also in creating more livable space in our community. The reduction in vehicular traffic that first occurred during the pandemic resulted in quieter, more navigable streets and less air and noise pollution, however, recently more and more vehicular traffic is invading our streets, which needs to be addressed. We are hopeful that congestion pricing can help to turn this tide, and that implementation will be done quickly.

One major transit deprivation impact has resulted from the removal of the M6 bus route and the diversion of the M1, M3, and M5 buses from the routes they followed for many years in District 2. The new route locations are difficult, if not impossible, to reach for CB2's sizable and growing senior and disabled populations who have depended on convenient bus service to access important destinations, such as medical facilities and food shopping. They have resulted in distances, timing, reduced stop locations, and frequencies that severely penalize the entire District's residents, workers, parents and children because of the long waits, crowded buses, far apart stops and lack of needed accessibility. With every passing year, the likelihood of these routes being restored becomes more doubtful, but we're hopeful that the remaining existing routes can be modified for the comfort and convenience of our seniors and physically challenged and all our citizens who depend on these buses for transportation. The ideal approach would be to have both SBS for longer, quicker trips and local bus stops placed frequently to accommodate the sizable population in our community that that is unable to walk several blocks to access a bus stop.

In a walking community like Community Board 2, with a populace that spends much of its time out and about on the streets, the City must continue to encourage improvements for pedestrian and alternative transportation modes with emphasis on design and regulation of streets, including traffic calming approaches and more pedestrian-oriented redesign of complex intersections, lighting and directional information for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, improved safety, enforcement, added bicycle parking both on sidewalks and in selected street spaces, as well as aesthetic improvements and an infrastructure fashioned to accommodate a balance between modes, including new micro-mobility ones. Facilitation of pedestrian and bicycle movements and access between the six major subway lines, bus routes, hospitals, commercial districts, open space, schools, universities, historic districts and residential communities, also needs to be pursued. With increased and increasing development on the Far West Side, attention needs to be given to providing public transportation opportunities, accessibility and connections in that area for residents, businesses, working people and those who visit.

Opportunities must be sought and identified to reclaim streets for public space that both support pedestrian activities and build community life. The Department of Transportation ("DOT") has begun to achieve this through its Plaza program in such areas as Gansevoort Plaza and Astor Place, which we welcome, and the Open Streets program is pointing the way to more shared streets, which we welcome.

Individuals using wheelchairs have a basic right, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to use our city streets. In May 2007, the Community Planning Fellow assigned to our Board by the Borough President, presented a pedestrian ramp study to our Traffic & Transportation Committee. The study found that twenty-three percent (23%) of all street corners in our district do not have pedestrian ramps. In addition, another fifteen percent (15%) of all corners have pedestrian ramps that are uneven with the adjacent roadbed, or degraded, making

them unusable or a safety hazard. It is our understanding that all regular corners now have pedestrian ramps. The City has begun the reconstruction of complex corners to install pedestrian ramps at those locations. We look forward to the day when this project is complete.

The degraded condition of our district's streets, particularly those paved with historic Belgian blocks, is an ongoing concern and, at times, presents a hazardous condition. Some of our many requests for capital repaving projects, street reconstruction, improved traffic conditions and other needed improvements have been heeded, but there is still much to be done. Maintenance will always be an urgent item on the community's agenda.

The proliferation of tour buses on our small, historic streets has produced a host of negative impacts, including hazardous conditions for pedestrians, air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, and broken street beds. CB 2 calls for increased regulation, enforcement, and relocation of tour bus routes to larger, more accommodating thoroughfares. A tour bus route-plan is long overdue, as is legislation putting it into action.

Recently, we have focused on working with DOT to create a safe environment for increasing bicycling as a mode of transportation. We have embraced the need to build protected bicycle lanes along many of our uptown/downtown and cross-town commuting arteries. However, there has been controversy. The majority of people who testify at our hearings are supportive of the bicycle lanes, but there are others who come with concerns about the impact of bicycles on pedestrian safety. We have a number of resolutions that ask the DOT to increase general education to the public about the protocols of the new bicycle lanes, and to look for ways to adjust the markings on the lanes to clearly announce how space is allocated to bicycles, pedestrians and cars. We also want to give proper attention to balancing the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians, with education and enforcement that prevents bicycling on sidewalks or going the wrong way on one-way streets, while protecting bicyclists from vehicular harm.

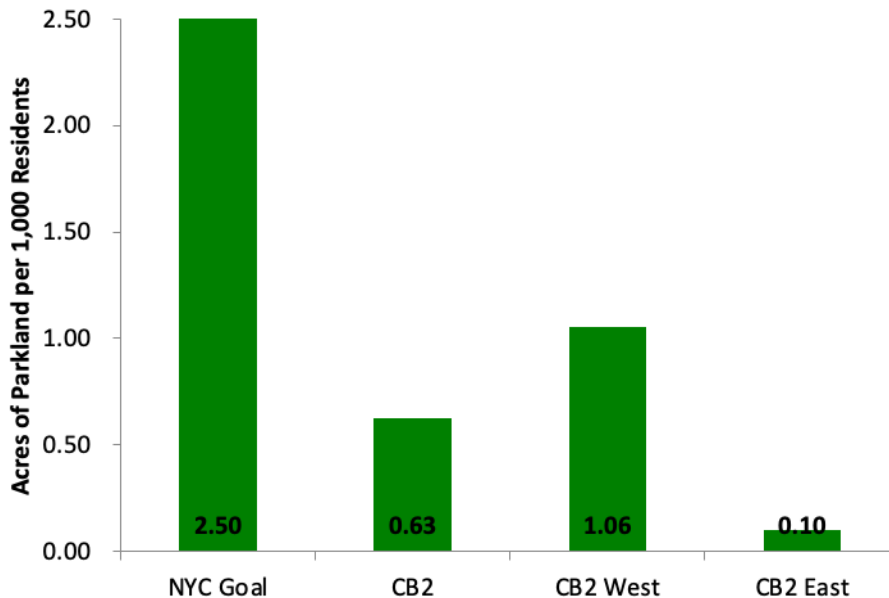
We also have been working closely with the DOT to look at our parking regulations in a new way. We have consistently supported pilot programs with muni-meters to test how variable pricing can work in our neighborhoods. Because we have so many destination areas, and know that many people insist in coming by car, over our bridges and tunnels, instead of using public transportation, we encourage the use of appropriate priced street parking to help reduce unnecessary circulation of cars looking for parking and to encourage visitors eventually to consider mass transportation (which hopefully will be restored and enhanced). We also support extending curbside access to accommodate increased e-commerce deliveries and FHV activity. We are heartened by the new streets master plan legislation which promises more safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and a better balance of street space for all modes of transportation on New York City's streets. We are also hopeful that congestion pricing will result in less motor vehicles impacting our community.

VII. PARKS AND WATERFRONT

With only about 0.63 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, our district has one of the lowest ratios of public open space in the city, well below the City standard of 2.5 acres. As shown in the chart below, the west side of CB2 is substantially better served by open space than the east side, which includes the neighborhoods of Chinatown, Little Italy, NoHo and SoHo.

CB2 Lacks Open Space, Particularly in on the East Side

In Chinatown, Little Italy, NoHo and SoHo



But important progress has been made in recent years. Along with the development of the Hudson River Park and the Highline, there has been a steady and ongoing stream of improvements to the quality and condition of our parks with ongoing renovations. In 2021, Little Island opened -- the new 2.4 acre Pier 55 in Hudson River Park -- creating a local, citywide and international park destination on our waterfront. The 2017 opening of a new park at St. Vincent's Triangle, which includes the AIDS Memorial at the northwest corner of the site, provides a popular oasis for community members and tourists to our area. The renovation of Little Red Square is nearing completion despite long delays due to contractor issues. We look forward to this park again being enjoyed by the Little Red School House and construction no longer burdening adjacent businesses. In Fall 2021, NYU and NYC Parks are finalizing the minor renovations for Mercer Playground.

These additions and improvements are critical, but they have not been sufficient because the population of families with young children continues to rise in our district, increasing the overcrowding of our active play spaces. In addition, several large-scale development projects and major rezoning proposals will add to the pressure on our parks and the need for more open space, particularly for active recreation.

Whereas the focus of our efforts over the last few years has been on the preservation and improvement of the existing parks, we now see a need to strive to take advantage of every opportunity to create new open space. We thank our elected officials and City agencies for their support and we urge them to continue to help us protect, preserve and improve the public open space while we ask that they work with us to pursue every opportunity for creating new open space in our district.

NYC Parks

In 2021, the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) closed the Tony Dapolito Center due to structural issues uncovered during renovations. At this time, we encourage the city to

allocate funds for a complete renovation of the recreation center, which contains the only public pool in our community and on the west side of Manhattan south of Chelsea.

We hope that NYC DPR complete the renovation of DeSalvio Playground and work with the adjacent condo developer so that the entire renovated park can be fully opened to the public.

Other capital needs going forward are for permanently preserving Elizabeth Street Garden (see section below), development of the Water Tunnel site on Hudson and Clarkson (see section below), installing an irrigation system at Seravalli Playground, funding a complete renovation of Vesuvio Playground, replacing the fence at Time Landscape, updating and renovating Minetta Playground and finding and developing appropriate space for additional dog parks.

Hudson River Park

The development of the Hudson River Park has been a great benefit to the residents in our park-starved district. The access to the waterfront, the bikeway and walkway, the playgrounds and seating areas are used year round. The ball fields on Pier 40, at Houston Street, have created the opportunity for children and adults to participate in organized sports leagues. Many residents take advantage of the relatively affordable vehicle parking on Pier 40, as well.

We have had two failed attempts to develop Pier 40 according to the parameters outlined in the Hudson River Park Trust Act. This is of increased concern because the pier is in very bad shape structurally. It is in desperate need of work on both its roof and pilings. Work on the pilings has recently been undertaken. We think these failures are due to the lack of public input into a planning process before the issuance of the RFPs.

CB2 will continue to work with the Community Advisory Committee of the Trust to try to restart the process to develop Pier 40. To succeed, it is imperative that the community be involved in the planning stages. Our board is committed to seeing that the athletic fields and parking remain, and that the necessary commercial development is appropriate to the park and additive to the community. While this project is clearly under the jurisdiction of the Trust, we would ask that the city's representatives on the Trust Board join us in advocating for a process and an RFP that responds to the needs of our district.

We welcomed the open of Little Island (Pier 55) to the Hudson River Park in Spring 2021. Just to the south, we anticipate the development of the Gansevoort Peninsula into a public space with sports fields, areas for lounging and river views, a salt marsh on the northern side, a resilient "beach" and kayak launch and "Day's End" on the southern side, and a new pavilion with large openings in the canopy that will evoke the geometric forms and light effects of Gordon Matta Clark's cuts into the warehouse on the site that is the inspiration for the art installation. Design is progressing without issue or delay and construction will begin in 2021.

Also, we are advocating to improve safe access to our waterfront. We appreciate the planned new public crossing of West Street into HRP from approximately where Charlton Street would run if it did not terminate at the UPS building on Greenwich Street. Because this project is designed and funded by Oxford Properties Group, the developers of 550 Washington we insist that the Charlton Garden Alley and new crosswalk remain for public uses and that Oxford Properties and/or Google investigate the possibility of providing crossing guards if the

intersection is found to be dangerous.

CB2 remains interested in investigating the possibility of a pedestrian overpass at or near Spring Street over Route 9A. Unfortunately, New York State does not seem to be receptive to this request. The Hudson Square neighborhood is becoming increasingly a residential area, and yet it has the worst open space ratio per person in our district. Currently, the only crossing to the park is on the south side of Canal Street, which is actually in Community Board 1. This effectively renders the entire neighborhood cut off from the Hudson River Park. Creating a new crossing will require the cooperation of many city agencies, New York State Department of Transportation, and the Hudson River Park Trust. We ask that the City commit to working with us to advocate for this change, as partial mitigation for the decision to locate a three-district sanitation garage and salt shed at Spring and West Streets, and in light of the upcoming proposal to rezone this area to allow for significant residential development.

Elizabeth Street Garden

Preserve Elizabeth Street Garden and Build More Affordable Senior Housing at Alternative Site. Since 2013, CB2 has held seven public hearings and passed five resolutions in support of the permanent preservation of Elizabeth Street Garden in its entirety as public open, green space and urges the City to transfer jurisdiction over this lot to the Parks Department. CB2 also supports the development of affordable housing at an alternative city-owned site at Hudson and Clarkson Streets where up to five times as much senior housing can be built, but only if Elizabeth Street Garden is preserved in its entirety.

Neighborhood Underserved by Open Space. The neighborhood around Elizabeth Street Garden lacks open space. Little Italy and SoHo account for 23% of CB2's population but have only 3% of its open space, virtually 100% paved, for an open space ratio of only 0.07 acres per 1,000 residents, as compared with the City Planning goal of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Furthermore, the majority of CB2's open space is in Washington Square and Hudson River Parks, nearly a mile and 1.2 miles from the Garden, respectively. Residents in Little Italy and SoHo are less likely to use these spaces with frequency. Furthermore, Elizabeth Street Garden is located in the only downtown Manhattan neighborhood that the NYC Parks Department defines as "underserved" by open space.

About the Garden. Elizabeth Street Garden is a unique community park and green space with open lawn, majestic trees, flowering garden beds, and sculptural artworks located in the Little Italy neighborhood of Manhattan, between Prince and Spring Streets. City-owned and privately leased, the Garden attracts more than 100,000 visitors each year, including local elementary students, families and seniors, as well as residents from around the city and tourists from around the world, who learn about the Garden from several travel websites and guidebooks.

The Garden is open to the public, weather permitting and volunteers provide free public and educational programming. The Garden's design, size and configuration make it ideally suited for movies, music, yoga, community festivals, arts performances, educational programs, gardening and quiet meditation that are not offered in any other nearby public community space.

DEP Water Tunnel Shaft Sites

For nearly 20 years, New York City has promised new public parks at three DEP Water Tunnel Shaft sites, upon completion of water tunnel construction. Recently the City is moving forward with creating open on East 4th Street in NoHo and Grand and Lafayette Streets in SoHo. Plans for improving 388 Hudson Street, the largest water tunnel site, remain open. The site is currently being used for DOT construction staging.CB2

Trees

As an area with very few large parks and burdened by high vehicular traffic, our district greatly values the benefits of streets trees. We support the citywide effort to plant one million new trees. We passed a resolution urging the Parks Department to make the replacement of trees the highest priority for tree plantings in our district and we have seen some replacements. We also requested a policy change whereby tree and stump removals automatically generate a high priority request for a new tree without the need for a second 311 request.

VIII. LANDMARKS and PUBLIC AESTHETICS

Ours is a historically rich community, graced by well over 2,000 century-old dwellings. Indeed, District 2 Manhattan has the oldest housing stock in the entire City with the median age of residential buildings at 94 years. Row houses constructed in the early 1800's, on what was then farmland, still stand in the Greenwich Village and Charlton/King/Van Dam Historic Districts. Cast-iron buildings that were bolted together in SoHo during the last half of the nineteenth century still line the streets today.

Within Community District 2 are now nine designated historic districts: Charlton-King-Van Dam; Gansevoort Market; Greenwich Village, with two extensions; SoHo Cast Iron, with one extension, MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens; NoHo, with one extension; NoHo East; and numerous individual landmarks.

The board has joined with other preservation organizations and our neighbors to advocating for the successful designation of the South Village District and the Stonewall Inn. The board continues to identify districts and individual buildings worthy of designation.

The strength of the Landmarks Preservation Commission is essential to preserving the unique quality of this district and remains evident in the value of properties here and tourists, guide books in hand, enjoying the well-preserved district. There is a very considerable increase in visitors to Sheridan Square following the designation of the Stonewall Inn and the creation of the Stonewall National Monument. CB2 is unique in the city, in that well approximately 75% of the building stock falls under the jurisdiction of the Commission.

There is an urgent need for increased funding for monitoring and enforcement at several stages:

Changes without certificates of appropriateness are frequent. The board, the Landmarks Committee, and the residents of the neighborhood are vigilant in documenting work in progress without permission. The Commission does not have staff who survey the districts for violations of this type. They only respond to complaints. Complaints, however, appear to take some time to be investigated and rarely result in the work's being stopped right away and months or years may pass before violations are corrected. Having staff to survey the district in this regard would

be desirable to replace the present haphazard reporting from the public.

When applicants appear before the Landmarks Committee to present work that has not been approved, the most frequent and least plausible excuse for not having obtained a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the work is an ignorance of the regulations. Increased monitoring would also address this concern. Less frequently, work is undertaken that is not in compliance with the Certificate of Appropriateness indicating need for increased monitoring during the carrying out of work that has been approved.

IX. SIDEWALKS & STREET ACTIVITIES

Sidewalks

The City's lack of enforcement in making outdoor dining a success brings concern as the program transitions into a permanent one in early 2023, with the potential to severely impact the quality of life for residents in the community amid permanent decisions being made during a pandemic with unknown long term consequences.

COVID-19 has dramatically increased the pressure on sidewalk access and usage. The existing sidewalk café regime that existed prior to COVID-19 that was administered by the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection was suspended during the onset of the pandemic. In June, CB2 provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to both the Mayor and City Council with an extensive set of suggestions related to exploring new outdoor dining options. In the summer of 2020 and 2021, with the advent of several outdoor dining initiatives under the auspices of the Department of Transportation, new semi-permanent build outs were created in roadbeds and to some extent on the sidewalk. As we enter the second winter with COVID-19 still prominent, the dramatic proliferation in a short period of time of full structures on both the sidewalk and in roadbeds where none had previously existed has significantly changed and impacted the use of sidewalks in our community with rampant illegal uses allowed to proliferate as a result of a lack of any enforcement or clear guidance.

CB2 Manhattan continues to see more pressure on sidewalk access and usage. The list of incursions grows as businesses try ever harder to differentiate themselves, particularly in the current economic conditions. The sidewalks are often home to sidewalk cafes, newsstands, sidewalk vendors, food truck crowds, benches, A-frame signs and other items taking pedestrian and open space, often illegally.

Community District 2 is an extremely popular area for tourists and tri-state visitors and the relatively narrow width of many of our sidewalks, especially on side streets, can lead to intense congestion that often forces people to walk in the streets, which is undesirable and unsafe. The incursions mentioned above, both legal and illegal, contribute to the problem.

These situations often create unsanitary conditions, limit or make pedestrian access treacherous in what is public right-of-way, and create an uneven playing field that encourages responsible establishments to break the rules as well, if only to compete with their opportunistic neighbors.

Street Activities

CB2 probably hosts more street fairs, block parties, etc. than any other district in the city. Although street fairs are a longstanding tradition in our neighborhoods, there are too many generic, promoter-based multi-block events that have no indigenous relationship to our neighborhoods. These long multi-block events take business away from the merchants who pay rent and taxes, and generally detract from the quality of life of our residents. We appreciate that there is a citywide moratorium on new multi-block fairs, but we urge the City to look for ways to better ensure sponsors are indeed functional organizations and are viable members of the immediate community.

CB2 remains disturbed by the endless proliferation of promotional and commercial events, some permitted and some not, which are occurring regularly in SoHo and, to a lesser extent, in NoHo. These events clog sidewalks and streets and often result in chaotic street scenes costing the City money and resources as it struggles to bring order to the mayhem. Residents are inconvenienced and neighboring businesses are hurt as temporary “pop-up” shops commandeer the sidewalks, close streets and often blast music that illegally impacts the quality of life of the neighbors. The City needs to focus on this growing problem and come up with ways to successfully address and contain it.

Pedestrian Plazas

Community District 2 is home to three pedestrian plazas that were created under the Department of Transportation's Plaza Program; Gansevoort Plaza (Plaza Partner-Meatpacking BID), Astor Place (Plaza Partner-Village Alliance), and Cooper Square (Plaza Partner-Grace Church School). Recently, Community Board 2 has received applications from the Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO) for large, long-duration commercial events within the pedestrian plazas. The substantial event fees paid by the applicants is used by each BID to provide enhanced maintenance and programming of the pedestrian plazas and the City receives substantial revenue, as well. The Plaza Program was created to provide “vibrant, accessible public spaces and walkable destinations” for the community. Programming is intended to make the plazas vibrant centers of activity and should include activities such as holiday events, food or craft markets, temporary public art installations or exhibits, and music and dancing. Pursuant to Plaza Program requirements, advertising is not permitted in the plazas. However, the Gansevoort Pedestrian Plaza, in particular, has seen a proliferation of events from corporate entities like Disney, Netflix, Dior, Kate Spade, and more. Often, the events continue for multiple days and feature an abundance of branding and advertising. In certain instances, SAPO has approved commercial events even after the Community Board recommended denial because of the over-commercialization of public space. Community Board 2 will continue to monitor the use of our pedestrian plazas.

X. ARTS AND INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

As New York City’s live performance venues are beginning to reopen after an 18-month pause, it remains unclear to what extent COVID-19 will impact District 2’s arts and cultural institutions over the near and long term. Continuing advocacy will be a critical element of reviving District 2’s arts and cultural institutions as the impacts of COVID-19 are addressed over time.

Climate change is also of concern as it relates to flooding and how more frequent weather events could adversely impact our community's arts and culture organizations. Smaller organizations with less access to funding support, tight margins, and smaller staffs would likely be the most vulnerable if faced with extensive damage and most at risk for permanent closure.

Whatever the adversity and challenges facing the arts and culture sector, CB2 will continue to champion the artists and venue operators in our neighborhoods and arts education in our schools.

We believe the arts and creativity are a crucial part of our social fabric, that they promote innovation both within and beyond arts and culture fields, that they are an essential part of our quality of life, and are an integral part of our community's and nation's identity.

A. The Arts

Fine Arts

CB2 is delighted by the arts and culture that the Whitney Museum of American Art in the Meatpacking District has infused into our area since opening its doors May 2015, and also appreciates the institution's regular communication with and support of our board. This important institution, which was originally founded in our district, is a great asset to the Far West Village and has begun to help re-focus the neighborhood as an art and design district. The Museum is an exciting center of art, with exterior exhibition spaces, as well the traditional interior spaces. Integrated with the High Line Park that runs along the eastern face of the building, the museum offers restaurants, gathering places, and other public areas as part of its overall design.

In addition, our district has other extraordinary museums, fine arts foundations, and artist collectives, including the NYC Fire Museum, the Children's Museum of the Arts, the Museum of Chinese in America, the Italian American Museum, the Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, the Merchant's House Museum, Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, SoHo Renaissance Factory, New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, and The Drawing Center, among many others. CB2 is also excited about the Jackie Robinson Museum, which is now scheduled to open in our district in Spring 2022, according to the organization's website.

Performing Arts

CB2 is also home to a unique array of performance spaces, Off-Broadway and independent theaters, film centers, and dance organizations. We take tremendous pride in the vibrant cultural scene that these organizations provide our community. A sampling of these cultural organizations and venues (non-profit and commercial) include:

Bond Street Theatre, Gene Frankel Theatre; HB Playwrights; Cherry Lane Theatre; HERE; Rattlestick Playwrights Theater; Greenwich House & Greenwich House Pottery; The Gym at Judson; IRT Theater; IFC Center, Film Forum; Angelika Film Center; Cinema Village; Quad Cinema; Minetta Lane Theater; Westbeth Center; New Ohio; The Public Theater; Joe's Pub; Ars Nova; Axis Theater; The Duplex; Peridance; Martha Graham Dance Studio; Soho Playhouse;

The Greene Space (WNYC Radio); Tenri Cultural Institute; Lucille Lortel Theater; Village Vanguard; Institutional theaters of NYU and The New School, among others.

In addition, after years in the making and several presentations to CB2, we are proud and pleased to be the home of New York City's newest arts destination, Little Island, which opened to the public for its first season on May 21, 2021. Our committee looks forward to continuing our strong relationship with Little Island and learning about the organization's arts programming and arts education plans moving forward.

Our committee is also proud to have been part of the process of supporting a brand new, free rehearsal space in the Meatpacking District in collaboration with CB2's Land Use Committee and Gansevoort Arts Advisory Panel. This new rehearsal space will be available beginning Fall 2021 for free or at below market rates, allowing many more small arts groups within CB2 and beyond to initiate and develop projects. The Arts and Institutions Committee hopes that this space and the many artists that will be coming through bring a new level of diversity and artistic vibrancy that continues CB2's legacy as a home for independent artists and forward-thinking ideas.

Looking Ahead

While arts and culture remains vibrant in our area, we remain vigilant about the fragile nature of the local arts scene due the impacts of COVID-19. We also remain concerned about the high rents and ongoing funding challenges for non-profits that have caused the closure of many of the district's Off-Broadway and small theaters and other cultural spaces in recent years, such as Cornelia Street Café and Actors Playhouse, two Greenwich Village fixtures. Some years ago, we supported a proposal to use tax incentives that would encourage landlords to retain live performance space. In addition, CB2 strongly supports city agency funding for the arts both in our area and citywide and increased arts education in public schools, as a growing body of studies presents compelling evidence connecting student learning in the arts to a wide array of academic and social benefits. Namely, these various studies indicate that the arts help to improve visual analysis skills and critical judgments inspire creativity and improve motivation, collaboration, attitudes and attendance.

B. Arts Advocacy

Ongoing advocacy for arts organizations and artists located within CB2 and for those that produce, program or present arts and culture within CB2 will be crucial as the impacts of COVID-19 remain a reality for the foreseeable future. Advocating for arts organizations and artists located within CB2 and for those that produce, program or present arts and culture within CB2 has been, and remains, a top priority for our board. For one, our committee has a history of writing resolutions and letters of support for nonprofit arts organizations located within our district that are seeking funding or restoration of funding from grant organizations and city agencies. We were also the first community board citywide to write a letter of support for New York City's first comprehensive cultural plan. In addition, we speak out against entities and agencies that seek to utilize our local parks and public spaces for arts-related projects that do not have wide community support, while strongly supporting public arts projects that are in alignment with the spirit of our community and neighborhoods. We also strive to foster connections among arts organizations within our district to forge stronger cultural alliances.

Finally, as is widely known, CB2 has historically been the home of a wide array of talented artists and, as such, our committee remains dedicated to advocating that the work of these local artists is a part of planned arts programming within our district whenever possible.

C. Libraries

We are increasingly concerned that budget cuts have resulted in a reduction in staff and in the hours of operation at the libraries in our district. Especially after the impacts COVID-19, libraries have become an even more crucial resource for education, community, and job-seeking and other career support. These reductions impact young children and the elderly most of all. We will continue to request that funds be allocated to keep the libraries and their community rooms open for as many hours as possible and to be made fully accessible. We also ask that the New York Public Library provide a dedicated staff to create special youth programming.

D. Religious Institutions with Arts Programming

The lack of affordable space continues to be a reality in our community. It especially poses challenges for the smaller non-profit arts groups, and so we see this affordability issue as a significant threat to the cultural ecosystem in our area. As such, CB2 continues to investigate and support new and creative ideas surrounding affordable space for the arts in our community. We are particularly interested in the model of sacred/secular partnerships, such as Judson Memorial Church and St. John's In The Village. These religious institutions have had their own arts programming in recent years, as well as affordable performance spaces that they allocate for outside arts groups. We hope this model is revived and expanded to other religious institutions in our area as the arts community continues to wrestle with numerous practical and financial challenges due to COVID-19.

E. Universities

There are five major higher education institutions located in Community Board 2: New York University, Cooper Union, Benjamin Cardozo Law School, Hebrew Union College, and The New School (which includes the Parsons branch). They draw tens of thousands of students, professors and other staff who commute to or live in the Village.

Over the past decades, New York University (NYU) has been buying buildings and either demolishing or renovating them for its own purposes. With its current campus master plan now in progress (Plan 2031), NYU will add 3 million square feet into the core of historic Greenwich Village. The plan will develop partly on property that NYU currently owns, and partly on city-owned land. The enormity of the project will have significant negative impacts on the quality of life for residents in their buildings and the surrounding streets, including the loss of affordable housing, publicly accessible and community friendly open space, congestion and density, change of use in favor of campus life over neighborhood, and designated historic buildings. Community Board 2 has the role of being the main liaison between the community and NYU. Plan 2031 was challenged in an Article 78 lawsuit brought by several community members and groups with a decision stating that Mercer Playground, LaGuardia Park and LaGuardia Community Garden are implicitly designated "parkland" and cannot be removed from public use. Appeals to that decision, and to the omission of the land in front of the Coles Sports Center on Mercer Street, were unsuccessful. In June 2015 the state's highest court upheld a lower court ruling allowing

NYU to move forward with its expansion plan. Our board remains in communication with NYU and will request that the institution present construction updates to our Arts & Institutions Committee as new parts of the project begin to come into play.

The New School does not have a formal expansion program. It is described as having a history of "adaptive re-use", meaning the school often leases space in the area and fits it to their needs. The institution recently purchased a building on 14th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues (behind 55 West 13th Street). We will continue to make every effort to work with The New School and keep the community apprised of any updates related to this purchase.

XI. SLA LICENSING

COVID-19 and emergency executive orders issued by the Governor of New York have superseded any sense of normal operations of establishments licensed by the New York State Liquor Authority and they have experienced severe economic hardship as a result. Those executive orders are the direct result of public health concerns. A significant focus of the Liquor Authority transitioned to enforcement and adjudication of those issues in the short term and as such, the licensing process and other normal administrative functions have slowed significantly. With the transition to almost exclusive outdoor dining during warmer months, new issues arose with respect to quality of life impacts and the impacts of expanding licensed premises outdoor areas. It is unclear how long the executive orders will remain in effect. It is also unclear how the expanded outdoor dining will continue and how ongoing quality of life issues will be mitigated. CB2 has been conducting bi-monthly meetings to quickly provide recommendations on licensing and other matters that come before the Board.

All neighborhoods within Community Board 2 are now saturated with liquor licenses. Every full on-premise application that comes before the board requires a 500-foot hearing at the State Liquor Authority ("SLA") because there are more than three existing on-premise liquor licenses nearby and public interest must be demonstrated. In fact, many have twenty or more licenses within the 500 feet. Prior to COVID-19, CB2 continued to see an increase in SLA applications despite the heavy saturation of liquor licenses throughout the district. To address this increase, CB2's SLA Licensing Committee has been meeting twice a month, every month, in order to complete a committee hearing at a reasonable time in the evening. Several areas in our district, in particular the Bowery, West Village, Greenwich Village, Kenmare corridor/Little Italy area, Meatpacking District, SoHo, and University Place are experiencing a dramatic increase in late night (and early morning) visitors who patronize new bars, clubs and restaurants. This trend has severely strained the quality of life for residents who are demanding that we stop approving SLA licenses, including beer and wine licenses in some cases or requiring curtailed operations in order to mitigate those quality of life impacts as afforded under the 500 ft. rule. There exists a heavy reliance on visitors and tourists to District 2 in order to support all these establishments which contributes to the quality of life impacts. .

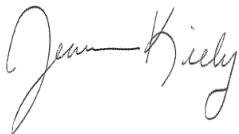
In addition to reviewing license applications, our staff and board members spend extensive time and resources asking the police and city agencies, along with the SLA, to enforce the legal 'methods of operation'. Far too often, establishments that have been approved as restaurants with background music, transform themselves illegally into late night venues. As a result, the residential community continues to suffer with even greater degree. Our office receives the complaints, but it is very difficult for us to get the appropriate agencies to do an inspection. It is

important that the City commit to working with the SLA to coordinate the timely enforcement of laws that are written in order to protect our residential and mixed-use neighborhoods from being overwhelmed by the negative impact of the concentration of nightlife. These types of operations represent a small percentage of operators overall, but represent a significant number of the complaints in our district.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Community Board 2 is a community of families, individuals and preservationists: our block and community associations plant and care for trees; friends' groups care for our parks; merchants' associations help local park and City groups; civic organizations clean their streets, and residents get involved and help. We also have BIDs, that are committed to supporting our businesses, and provide security, extra sanitation services and street beautification projects to ensure that their areas remain attractive destinations. The fact that the historic beauty and integrity of our many neighborhoods has survived is clearly due to these efforts. Each of these groups has been under tremendous pressure as a result of COVID-19 and a slowing delivery of certain City services.

In the wake of the impacts of COVID-19 on service delivery, it is imperative that the City properly evaluates the services it delivers and makes the same commitment to our district, as have our residents and businesses. Since the advent of the various open dining programs this June, there has been no enforcement on the part of any city agencies despite ongoing complaints and obvious public safety issues. The city has abdicated its responsibility as an enforcement partner of the state in enforcing executive orders and liquor licensing regulations. Increasingly, City agencies are asking for input from the community board regarding the issuance of licenses, changes to regulations and feedback for large development projects. However, we notice that building owners, restaurateurs and cafe entrepreneurs have found it too easy to build and operate in complete disregard of local laws. New businesses are opened and profits are reaped while complaints sit on agency desks. Illegal and unlicensed operations continue without inspections and penalties, and residents continue to complain to the Board office. More careful attention must be paid to the zoning regulations regarding building plan examiners and sidewalk cafe application certifiers. Illegal construction continues in CB2. And too often, we are asked to retroactively approve illegal renovations in our historic districts. We need City agencies to establish procedures that will help us to protect our neighborhoods in line with existing laws, and then follow up with inspections to ensure that violations are cured in a timely manner.



Jeannine Kiely
Chair



Bob Gormley
District Manager